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# THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE A.A.L.

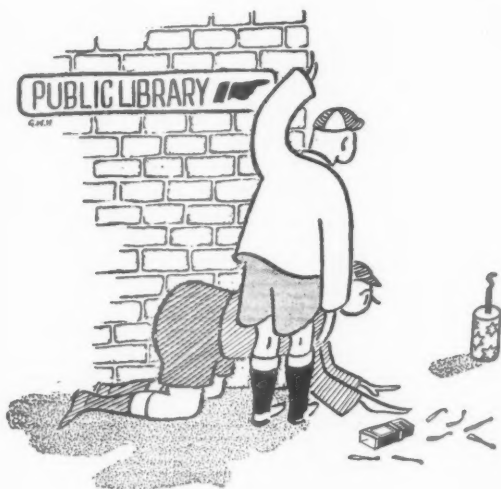


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# THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

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Clerihews contributed by Mary Pearce

## PRACTICAL CLASSIFICATION AND CATALOGUING.

*Even in an otherwise strangely light-hearted issue, some weighty matters demand urgent attention. The A.A.L. Council is gravely concerned at the disturbing effect upon students of recent correspondence upon this subject, due primarily to lack of definition in the present syllabus. Your representatives will press for clarification, and in the meantime we publish further letters which may assist students in reaching their own conclusions.*

**W. H. Phillips** writes :—

I agree that examiners should require proof that candidates are competent "number builders," but let them choose examples to bring in those sections of the schedules where specific instructions are given on the use of the various special tables. For the examination to have any practical significance, the examiners must demand evidence that candidates can use a chosen scheme with intelligence and are well-versed in its mechanics. To produce such numbers as 352.04200058 from the Decimal Classification even in the examination room, should, I suggest, be taken as proof to the contrary on both counts.

**P. M. Whiteman**, *Assistant Lecturer, Leeds School of Librarianship*, writes:—

The points raised by Mr. Phillips on the length of class numbers will cause utter confusion in the minds of candidates. Mr. Pugsley's note partially corrects the matter, but students may wonder who is right. It may clear the air a little to point out that one recent examiner's report stated that many failures are due to poor classification, and that if Dewey 14th edition is used, candidates must be thoroughly familiar with the geographical divisions and supplementary tables, and must apply them correctly or lose marks. Mr. Phillips' advice to use such devices "only when specific instructions appear to that effect in the main tables" is very dangerous and should be ignored by examination candidates.

**B. Hunnisett**, *Central Lending Librarian, Worthing P.L.*, writes :

In the examination one has to classify without regard to the limiting factors of a collection of books, and yet the aim of it is to test practical classifiers. This crux has an unsettling effect upon the candidate, who, in most cases, is tempted to translate every conceivable facet of a title into the notation, but who has been told that long numbers are not practicable in use for a number of reasons. The limiting factors of the numbers of books under a head, size of collection

and previous decisions are vitally important in practice, and therefore it seems reasonable that the examiners should accept the influence (perhaps subconscious) of such on a candidate's answer by not expecting more than an accurate **subject** placing to the extent of the schedules used. The wording of the questions Mr. Pugsley quotes imply that the examiners are critical of the length of B.N.B. numbers in proportion to their average usefulness—candidates are asked to "comment on the efficiency of each [number analysed]".

JOHN STONEHAM

## SUCH DARLING FOLIOS

*Reprinted, with forgiveness, from "Hangover," the organ of the North Western Polytechnic School of Librarianship.*

IT WAS Friday afternoon. A sound of scuffling caused me to look up from the *New Statesman*, and I observed that the junior assistant from Margate in the next seat but one was reading the correspondence column of *Reveille* with studied unconcern while the girl with whom, ten minutes earlier, he had been entwined, was gazing stolidly to the front as she pulled her skirt down over her knees.

Ah, Youth! I sighed wistfully and was about to return to Critic's un-American polemic when I became aware that the Principal had at last disposed of the Westminster Case and was making an announcement.

"... Tuesday afternoon ... visit to B.M. ... bibliographic treasure-house ... meet in Museum Street ... any questions?"

"Please, will they show us Angus Wilson?"

"You're a funny lad. Haven't your lecturers told you that Wilson is an American company?"

"Oh, sir! *Not* H. W., *Angus*. He's our leading social satirist. From the twin vantage points of Dolphin Square and the Reading Room of the British Museum, he observes the behaviour of the British Bourgeoise and cruelly records it in the most excoriating stories. He's *terribly* fashionable." (for this was two years ago).

As we filed out, the Principal was observed to make an entry in his small black notebook. "Wilson, Angus. Satirist. Works at B.M. Check this."

: : : :

The young man who met us at the entrance was elegantly dressed and wielded an academic lisp with considerable charm, but one had seen Wilson's photograph in *Vogue* and one knew that this was not he.

It was, I suppose, a rewarding afternoon by the Principal's standards. We were taken through Dickensian offices where old men in their middle twenties pasted catalogue slips into folio volumes. We were shown the dusty room where new additions await their apotheosis in the B.N.B. We trailed down the echoing alleys of Kafkaesque stackrooms. We looked with boredom at rare folios, and with delight at the wheezing progress of an Emmett conveyor belt. And our guide was all eagerness to explain the secrets of his book tomb, although he became evasive when we asked to see that complete set of Sade which, we had read, is kept under seal and may only be opened in the presence of, among others, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

And then, at last, we emerged on to a narrow, circular gallery from which could be observed the whole area of the Reading Room with all its curious, envied inmates. An old man in a high collar fingered almost lasciviously a duodecimo, while a haggardly blond youth vaguely waved a request slip at a distant attendant. Did we intercept a glance of complicity between the two? But where, then, was the recording angel with the ascetic features above the bow tie? Where was that remorseless observer whose life, we knew, was devoted to the scrupulous exposure of all the furtive foibles and squalid self-deceptions of mankind? He was not there. We craned our necks and searched the room: we gazed up into the dome, but it was of no avail. For this moment, human nastiness

went unrecorded. It was as though the Almighty had taken the afternoon off for a nap.

Perhaps we should have asked our guide, but we dared not. For what if *He* should somehow overhear us and devastatingly embalm the incident in some future book? *Young intellectual snobs chasing literary lion.* There were, we felt, pleasanter ways of achieving immortality.

Our tour petered to a close. We stood in the forecourt. The treasure house was behind us and we had not even seen the guardian geni.

The boy from Margate fondled his girl friend. The rest of us gazed at each other in depression.

"Si nous etions mortels, je dirais: Buons."

But the Museum Tavern was closed.

: : : :

Fremont Rider

Said 'Books must get no wider;  
And whoever can make them thinner  
Is on to a winner.'

Let us lose no time

In addressing a cordial rhyme  
To Mr. Ralph Esterquest,  
Our distinguished midwesterguest.

R. C. BENGE

## LETTER TO A PROSPECTIVE TUTOR

DEAR ERNEST,

I hear that you intend to become a full-time library tutor. Before it is too late may I offer you some middle-aged advice and ask you some pointed questions.

First, have you the right propensities? The *sine qua non* is a vague unfocussed immorality of the kind which auctioneers, actors and parsons have, an ability to exploit whatever meagre shreds of personality fate has been rash enough to grant you. I think you are not devoid of this; I remember how good you were as Bully Bottom. What else is required? Knowledge and teaching ability, you will say. The first can be acquired and the second can be developed if present, but you will require further an understanding, preferably sympathetic, of the fact that full-time library students don't usually want to learn anything at all—at least not anything relevant. Some of them it is true have obscure desires concerning the examination, but most are present at library schools

for quite other reasons. Naturally enough most of them want to escape from their libraries or their colleagues or merely from their own past, while others more positively hope that some revelation may be at hand or some humdrum thing like a husband. You must understand, Ernest, that you may not be able to help in all these cases.

You must prepare yourself for drudgery also. As a teacher you will become a grey, pathetic, Thurber-like creature: you will be all the time trying to give away what may not be worth giving or what nobody wants. This will turn you into an erring and extravagant spirit creeping along your curious course while normal librarians (those happy *hommes moyens sensuels*) pursue their profligate and primrose paths. In this way your well-known creative urges will atrophy. I know that your teeming brain is gestating with articles about split issues and so on; these I fear must remain forever still-

born. Are you prepared to be mute and inglorious, Ernest?

You will also soon pass from a normal dislike of your colleagues to a monomaniacal hatred of all librarians and libraries everywhere. There will, of course, be no escape from this ever. (Incidentally, it might be wiser to arrange for your divorce from your wife now rather than wait until later when it will interfere with your work). But this is not all; you will be chained like Cerberus, or whoever it was, not only to your unlovely colleagues but also to the Sanctified Syllabus, and what the Syllabus cannot embrace with its barbaric and clumsy tentacles must be put away. This is a terrible thing, Ernest.

One more question: What will your function be? Teacher? Tutor? Lecturer? Gaoler? Keeper? You will have to be all these; you will have to badger, bully, wheedle and cajole, like ludicrous tame cormorant you will regurgitate professional froth. If some of your students then miraculously pass their exams. (waving their charterships in infant hands) you will be haunted by horrid doubts. Will they be any happier? Perhaps nobody should ever pass. But these are Kafka nightmares, Ernest, such as you will have and must try to put away.

You will have heard of certain advantages; holidays for instance. Alas, the habit of Being Prepared grows so strong that even in the Rock Pool on the seashore those bewhiskered prawns remind you of old men in newsrooms leaning against the stands. You will not escape so easily, Ernest.

Finally, let me warn you that as time proceeds your verbal and vocal mannerisms will become fixed and inescapable; your language facile and diffuse and your lectures will become altogether insufferable. Eventually total incoherence will overtake you; you will have arrived. Somewhat before this,

another state may intervene. You will be assailed not perhaps with real paranoia—although this is not unknown—but with solemn and pompous doubts about your own mediocrity hitherto so evident to all. If this condition should seriously set in there is only one course open; return—if they will have you—to your library. There you will be allowed no such illusions.

: :

Grace O. Kelley  
Used to tremble like a jelly  
Whenever she met any fans  
Of Margaret Mann's.

What a shame that Minnie Sears  
Didn't spend a few years  
Less on headings  
And more on weddings.

Doctor Bray  
Founded the S.P.C.K.;  
He was always passing round the hat  
For things like that.

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## DEEP SOUNDINGS I

NOW THAT it is generally accepted that the profession is firmly stuck in primeval mud until the Clearwaters wash the way forward, we must pronounce upon the hitherto confused question of book rejection and censorship. Having studied the history of book rejection (earlier the burning of rolls, the breaking up of bricks) from the fairly early times when Noah banned polygamous and polyandrous books as antedeluvian, we now have proposals which we put forward with the authority of our collective age (roughly 150).

Contemporary pronouncements are not helpful. Blutner of Garton has decreed that Kinsey vol. 2 should be lent only to citizens over 24½ who can produce certificates of health, marriage and birth, together with evidence of need, while Wrist of Hortal declares that this work should be studied by all who can prove a total absence of relevant experience. The staff of Hortal are presumably working out methods (suitable for the public service point) of establishing this absence. We have no doubt that Mr. Water of Carrington has shown in the pages of the *Bookseller* that thrillers provoke crime while on the other hand "J.F.W.B." has proved with reference to statistics from all countries except Greenland that prisoners should be given not only crime books but also textbooks on poisoning and safe-breaking. Is the profession (he asks) qualified to select such specialist literature? (1).

It seems to us that there is an incurable difference of view here. Who can tell what would have happened if the Mancunians had been allowed to read that poisonous book before instead of after? Our proposals make such speculations idle. We suggest the immediate setting up of the N.L.D.L.—the National Library of Dreadful Literature. Sufficient copies of all disturbing, dangerous and doubtful books must be made available for loan to all those citizens who have been turned away from local libraries and can prove it. Certain people such as Bishops, Cabinet Ministers and John O'Leary would be admitted unconditionally. One copy of each dreadful book will be preserved for posterity, provided that posterity is somehow made to understand that there are or were other libraries. (In Eire, of course, the N.L.D.L. would rapidly outgrow the other relatively tiny collections).

At this stage, detailed administrative proposals are premature. The inevitable and more or less Appropriate Body will be set up. There will be a committee to which busybodies with special knowledge of the dreadful will be co-opted. For instance, the secretary of the League of Genteel Maidens, Messrs. Cohn and Schine, Sir Waldron Smithers, Arthur Deakin and Sir Alfred Munnings would probably be willing to serve provided that they could be allowed to denounce almost everybody once a month. (This would ensure a rapid growth of the collections). The librarian will, of course, be T. Clearwater (2), while the staff will need special training in distinguishing polymorphic types (3). This would be necessary for survival. Various departments at once suggest themselves: e.g., photographs (close classification required here) (4); prints and drawings; manuscripts (unpublished documents) and two special departments, one for books on the Index and books on devil-worship and witchcraft, and another closed to the public where will be gathered bowdlerised and mutilated books, e.g., innumerable spurious editions of D. H. Lawrence, Ovid, Robert Burns, Shakespeare, Rochester

and Brown's *Manual of Library Economy*. These harmful works will be available to research workers only.

Stock will be built up initially from the restricted shelves of existing libraries, thus making available several miles of shelf-space in Chief Librarians' offices throughout the country.

The classification scheme will have to be devised so that borrowers are properly segregated. For instance, the minor religious sects will have to be carefully scattered about the room while the works of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch will have to be separated from those of the divine Marquis himself; otherwise the public will become intolerably confused. Fiction and autobiography (treated as one) must be classified and no distinction made between Literature (Henry Miller, Genet, Frank Harris, Norman Douglas) and literature (Micky Spillane, James Hadley Chase and Angela Thirkell).

Enough has been said to indicate the scope of our great project. The mind boggles at its possibilities (5). The profession can now go forward hand in hand into uncharted seas along unexplored avenues and unscaled heights, to advance at last into long-sought terra incognita of fulfilment—the union of the dreadful book with the dreadful reader every time.

#### Notes and References.

- (1) When cornered in his palatial suite of offices at the *Librarian*, and asked for his answer to this important question, "J.F.W.B." rudely replied, "What do YOU think?"
- (2) T. Clearwater, by his brilliant and consistent use of high-sounding flannel, booming rhetoric and grinding repetition, has demonstrated a fitness for this important post not possessed by any other librarian. *Ex nihilo nihil . . .*
- (3) Apted's Angela will be taken on the staff without delay, thus saving her from the awful fate of meeting Mr. Hepworth on short lists 16-57 sometime before he or she retires (whichever is the earlier).
- (4) We are indebted to a little man in the B.N.B. basement for classifying a rare historical photograph depicting the well-known aberration, prevalent in Carmarthen, of fixation on ordinary egg-shaped sewer pipes. 131.342124090006282240914298[1].
- (5) Dafft-Flubbing has pointed out in succinct language, however, that boggling is an inverted form of dissociation producing traumatic disorders such as shelving books spines inwards. See his *Felicity does it again*, Chills and Boom, [n.d.], pp. 456ff.

: : : :

Still remembered hazily  
Is James Coats of Paisley  
As the John Rylands  
Of the Highlands and Islands.

Mr. McClellan  
Has little in common with Magellan:  
He seldom cries 'Land ho!',  
Nor is his name Fernandho.

Few people at Belsize  
Are blessed with gazelle's eyes;  
Nor could you call Dudley  
Exactly cuddly.

A. C. Jones  
(I feel it in my bones)  
Is pale as two candles  
And goes in for sandals.

Mr. Hoy  
Was once a boy;  
An experience the present writer  
Has had denied her.

Mr. Shaw Wright  
Dreams every night  
Of finding a diary  
In a medieval friary.

## THE READERS OF TOMORROW

Can the Library profession produce a body of children's librarians of the calibre needed to supply a library service for children of the type envisaged by Mr. Wheatley in his article *Priority for the Readers of Tomorrow* in last month's *Assistant Librarian*. Or would it not be true to say, as was said by a contributor to *The Times Literary Supplement* (Children's Books section) of June 26th, 1953, that . . . "English children's librarians seem often to have drifted into the work on leaving school and, being hampered by inexperience and low salaries, to have had little opportunity of even considering other employment, so that children's work may be chosen merely as the most congenial branch of a profession that no longer has any appeal." This may be a somewhat harsh generalisation to apply to many of the inspired and devoted children's librarians in the profession, nevertheless, it is broadly true. The status of the children's librarian is low; in very few systems is she placed on a level with, say, the Reference Librarian, and yet her work demands as specific a knowledge of as wide a field of special literature as does her colleague's, and demands too a vast variety of skills ranging from storytelling to paper sculpture, and from dealing with a huge mob of excited children just released from school to guiding a highly-skilled "train-spotter" through a mass of technical material.

The changing pattern of education with its emphasis on the school library and the use of books must add to the qualities demanded of a children's librarian the ability to meet teachers on their own level, and for this some knowledge of educational problems and ideas is necessary. Such professional librarians must be found and trained if the profession is to grasp the opportunity offered it by educationists. At present no training course in library work with

young people is available in the British Isles. The Youth Libraries Section is, naturally, concerned about this, and with the active help and co-operation of the North Western Polytechnic, has arranged a full-time Course of training in library work with young people which will cover the Syllabus for Part IVb of the Finals Certificate but which will not be confined only to candidates for it.

This six-weeks course will be held at the North-Western Polytechnic from 26th April to 5th June, 1954, and will cover the whole field of children's literature, its history, content and criticism from its earliest beginning to the present day: the history, development and administration of children's libraries in this and other countries; the history of education and the School Library movement, with introductory lectures on child psychology and the problem of the retarded reader. The Course will comprise lectures, visits and discussions and visiting lecturers will be drawn from a wide field of experts both within and outside the library world.

For students resident in the Administrative County of London, fee for the Course will be £5. Other students may be admitted at this fee provided they have obtained the permission of the local Education Authority. Financial assistance for intending students may be made available under Section 8 of the National Joint Council's scheme of Conditions of Service. Some authorities release staff on full pay for the purpose of attending such courses.

Further information about the Course, fees, etc., together with forms of application, which must be returned by 1st March, 1954, can be obtained from Mr. P. H. Sewell, F.L.A., Department of Librarianship, Prince of Wales Road, London, N.W.5.

## LIBRARIAN-SHIP

Lifemanship may be defined as *the art of being one up* (S. Potter, *Lifemanship* p. 14). Its application in the field of librarianship has already been the subject of advanced study elsewhere. The two short chapters which follow are from a projected work on the subject, and the coming winter will no doubt see the formation of working parties at Divisional level for the intensive study of other portions of the vast field.

### THE BASIC ASSISTANT-READER RELATIONSHIP

Libraries, being designed to some extent at least to the specifications of librarians, naturally contain many features whose chief function it is to instill into the reader a becoming respect for the institution which provides his westerns and love-stories. The ecclesiastical gothic of Croydon and the secular classicism of Manchester are equally effective in achieving their object—to make the reader feel small, thereby giving the acclimatized assistant an initial advantage.

The intimidating notices of earlier entrance halls have now rightly been condemned as unnecessarily crude, and have mostly been discarded. Adjurations not to spit were all very well in buildings which invited one to do that very thing (as D. Halliday has pointed out), but they tend to encourage in the present-day reader a state of mind far different from that in which he should approach the inner shrine. Nowadays it is the fashion to eliminate notices altogether. This, of course, is equally putting-off, and is especially recommended in large libraries, where readers may become completely demoralised before eventually they find the courage to make their needs known.

*Counter-play* (not to be confused with *counter-Play*). As one would expect the counter has assumed outstanding importance in the basic play. It is the bastion from behind which the initial wearing-down process must be conducted, and to which the assistant may withdraw when in danger of being cornered by a troublesome reader.

There are two schools of thought regarding Counter-play. The first believes in giving the assistant every appearance of comfort—easy chair, electric fire (in season), rotating issue table—whilst leaving the reader standing self-consciously exposed from the waist up to the glances and giggles of two other assistants who are supposedly working elsewhere behind the counter. More effective, however, seems to be the approach of the second school, which provides a high counter, over which the tallest reader can just peep, backed by a low platform on which the assistant is raised about six inches above floor level. This translates into delightfully concrete terms the one-upness which must be our constant aim.

*Wicket-play*. Wicket gates provide the first indication to the reader that he must watch his step—or rather that someone else is surreptitiously watching it for him. When the counter is fitted with waist-, foot-, or hand-operated wickets, it is advisable for the assistant to delay releasing the gate for just that fraction of a second which will enable the too-impatient reader to realise who is in charge. The same tactics may be employed at the exit counter—an effective method of "having the last word" with anyone who is inclined to be the least bit uppish.

S. Potter himself has pointed out the overwhelming importance of good timing to the efficiency of a gambit (*Gamesmanship*, p. 17), and whether it is a question of keeping readers waiting while he converses with

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his (female) colleague at the enquiries desk, of brushing aside the flies from the returned-books trolley, or of switching off the lights as a sign that the library will soon be closing, the lifeman-librarian must be constantly on his toes, watching for the precisely effective moment. In this as in all other ploys, only hard practice can lead to real split-second proficiency.

*Catalogue-play.* The second great weapon of the lifeman-librarian is the catalogue, sometimes referred to as a guide to the contents of the library. It is usual to provide also a guide to the contents of the catalogue; this should be carefully worded so that it all appears delightfully simple, and the reader begins to think that he must really be rather stupid not to make it work. When he is thoroughly convinced of his incompetence he will do one of two things. (a) He may accept defeat and wander aimlessly off to the shelves; this is a victory for librarian-ship, but of the second order only, and entitles the assistant to be  $\frac{1}{2}$ -up. Alternatively, (b) he may in desperation ask for assistance. Such is his state of confusion, however, the chances are that he will ask it of another reader; and there is no more delightful experience for the lifeman-librarian than to watch two readers showing one-another how to use a catalogue. But let us suppose that the reader applies for guidance to our lifeman-librarian. It is, of course, not necessary that he should himself have mastered the workings of the catalogue in order to seize this heaven-sent opportunity to become one-up. He should have prepared himself for such a situation by planting a set of suitably prepared cards in appropriate parts of the catalogue. Once more timing is all-important. He must appear to bend an attentive ear to the reader's plaint, but must leap in with his demonstration before the precise problem has been stated. The reader will thus be left to apply the lesson learned to his own particular case, while the assistant walks with a cultivated insouciance back to the counter.

#### COUNTER COMMITTEE PLAY

We turn now to another aspect of lifemanship in the library field. The assistant who cannot obtain advancement in his own library will sooner or later be driven to seek it elsewhere. Advancement in his own library, indeed, offers very little scope for the practising lifeman, who is at his best among strangers, and he should be well able to hold his own with lay-assistants when face to face with an unknown librarian and his committee. (See forthcoming chapter on *The art of interviewing a committee*). But first he must secure a place on the short list, and a simple course of study will enable him to do this at will.

*Application-ship.* The writing of applications *after* perusal of one's two or three testimonials is a ploy of which lifemen have no monopoly; it is, of course, common practice. But only the true lifeman can take full advantage of the opportunities so offered.

It may be necessary, for example, to counter the implied slur in such a description as "a steady worker." The lifeman will enlarge upon the many highly responsible tasks which have been entrusted to him precisely because of this stolid quality, though in referring to his part in preparing a new branch for its opening (for example) he will not find it necessary to explain that this consisted of six solid days' stamping and labelling. **THE LIFEMAN ALWAYS KNOWS WHEN HE HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH.**

The purpose of the application is to secure the interview, and it must be designed to achieve that object. It is a useful exercise to write an application for every post that is advertised, though it is not necessary

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to post more than half of these. There are many lifemen in responsible positions to-day who will bear witness to the wisdom of this advice, having found that practice has led them to proficiency at the last.

*F.R.S.A.-manship.* We take it as axiomatic that qualifications (i.e., letters after one's name) are a good thing in librarianship. If you find difficulty, therefore, in acquiring those of the Library Association, look around for some plausible alternative. We do not suggest that this will necessarily be easier to acquire than the F.L.A., but it may be better suited to your particular aptitude; its application to the job in hand is, of course, of minor importance, since committees do not usually enquire into such matters. Generally speaking, however, though extra-library qualification may weigh heavily against another man's Fellowship, they should be accompanied wherever possible by the Associateship—unless, of course, you happen to have a degree.

Should you experience difficulty in acquiring qualifications of any sort whatever it is a good ploy to become a member of something, and though this cannot usually be expressed forcefully in suffix form (M.L.A., for example, is easily seen through and may even have the opposite effect from that intended) it can be very useful when writing applications, and can be employed effectively and at length on the title-pages of any books you may have written. (See *Bookman-ship*, below).

It need scarcely be said that the possession of obscure decorations and medals is invaluable, especially when the initials lend themselves to misinterpretation (L.P.M., Lighthousekeeper's Proficiency Medal; A.L.D., Arkwright Lobstercatchers' Diploma). We can give no advice on the acquisition of such desirable accessories; suffice it to say that they are not to be despised should the opportunity occur.

*Bookman-ship.* The master-plot, in the matter of influencing committees, is undoubtedly to have written a book. This should preferably not be about librarianship, thus showing the breadth of your interests. It must, however, be on a subject of assured respectability, indirectly related to libraries. Gramophone records and music (N.B., *classical* music) are recommended lines, and some aspect of literature or staff management is fairly safe. Poetry has considerable prestige value among the right people, but library committees are so seldom composed of the right people.

Of course a book on librarianship is better than no book at all, and if you can't manage that then at least get some articles or letters published somewhere. A bibliography should form part of every life-man's letters of application.

Should even this be beyond your capabilities, then it is a good plan to announce that you are in the course of writing a book. The struggling author of an unpublished masterpiece may even command greater sympathy than his successful opponent if he plays his hand carefully. It is necessary, of course, to be entirely honest about such an important matter, but there is no need to proceed with the work once it has served its purpose. Its glory will remain with you in your new appointment, and if the title is sufficiently sonorous (*The place of the raven in mediæval mythology*, for instance, or *The social significance of French windmills at the end of the nineteenth century*), there is no doubt that it will add immeasurably to your stature in the eyes of your new chief.

For the benefit of our older readers (vide *The Library World*, Dec., 1951, p. 401), it should perhaps be pointed out that it would in fact be very naughty to apply the philosophy of lifemanship too literally to the practice of librarianship. It will be apparent that the author of this article has a close affinity with S. C. Holliday (*Library Assistant*, Nov. 1951, pp. 131-133, but we are assured that his researches have been carried out independently, without either plagiarism or collusion.—Hon. Ed.



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